



Did You Know?

This notice contains important information for the citizens, business owners, and contractors which live and/or work within the City of Alamo Heights.

Over the past few months, the Planning and Development Services Department has received numerous calls regarding renovations to neighboring homes and the resulting asbestos and lead-based paint concerns. Both Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's) and lead-based paint products were frequently used from the early 1900's to the end of the century and still some to this day. While the federal government has established regulations for ACM's and lead-based paint regulations primarily for public or commercial buildings, some regulations exist for residential homes.

Asbestos

Per Senate Bill 509, 77th Regular Session, before permits for certain types of projects may be issued for renovation/remodel or demolition of a public or commercial building, the permit applicant may be required to provide proof of an asbestos survey or provide an acknowledgement from a licensed architect or engineer that the affected parts of the building do not contain asbestos. Unfortunately, state law exempts residential structures and projects from these regulations.

So if the federal asbestos regulations do not apply to single-family residential construction, why should I worry about my home?

Just because state law doesn't regulate the abatement of ACM's in residential homes and construction, it doesn't mean that ACM's don't exist within the home. Many of the common materials used in home construction such as cementitious siding, cementitious pipes, vinyl floor tile, sheet flooring, metal window glazing, as well as some roof and exterior siding materials are very sturdy and, therefore, do not release the asbestos fibers, unless they are subjected to damage or removal. However, other loose materials such as pipe insulation and thermal insulation are likely to release asbestos fibers more easily. If you never have the need to disturb these materials, you may be able to leave them alone. But if you know that a needed repair or renovation will disturb the suspected material, you may want to consult with a professional to evaluate the materials and provide proper abatement the asbestos during the project.

The City of Alamo Heights has no enforcement authority in regard to the abatement or disturbance of ACM's within residential construction or renovation projects.

For more information please visit: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/asbestos/>

Lead-Based Products

Lead exposure is especially damaging to children under age six whose bodies are still developing. On April 22, 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule requiring the use of lead-safe work practices aimed at preventing lead poisoning in children.

Effective April 22, 2010, this federal rule now requires that all companies, firms, or renovators who work in child care facilities, schools, or homes built prior to 1978 and disturb more than six square-feet of area be certified, individual renovators must be trained by an EPA-accredited training provider, and the firms and renovators must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

Even the smallest project can be harmful when considering the effects of lead-based paint. While considering your next renovation or remodel, make sure to require an EPA Lead-Safe Certification of your contractors.

The City of Alamo Heights has no enforcement authority in regard to this rule.

For more information please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/lscp-press.htm>